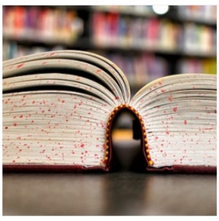
Why I Write Short Books (and Blog Posts)



The Eternal Revolution can now be ordered from Amazon, and I am still awaiting my first shipment from the printer. As this latest books finds its way into people's hands, one of the first things you will notice is that it is relatively short for a book.

At just over 6,000 words and 40 pages in print, it is short for what we have come to expect from a book. As someone commented a few months ago, my blog posts tend to be short too.

This is intentional. How many books of 200-300 pages do you read in a year? How many are published? How many 1,800 word articles posted on blogs can you read in a day, and how many are produced daily? We just don't have the time to consume all the content – even all the free content – that is made available. Also, the early Church fathers and monastic rules constantly warned about talking too much, not too little.

Book publishing has change drastically in the last few years. I believe it is the biggest change since Gutenberg's printing press. Since the invention of the press, duplication of printed matter has become easier, but it has not necessarily become open to everyone. Hiring a printer to set type required a return on investment for the time, and producing a modern book for publication required hours of labor, not only from the author, illustrator, editors, marketing team, advertising, printer, truck driver, and so on. A new hardcover book required a $30 price point and a print run in the tens of thousands to make enough to pay everyone a rate worthy of their time and effort. Which means that an idea that could be expressed in 50 pages has to, instead, be padded to make the book thick enough to be worth $30. As a result, non-fiction books especially can feel dragged out, over-fluffed, and appear difficult to read. Like Christianity (according to Chesterton) they are perceived difficult and left untried. The price-setting, page-padding practice is becoming outdated when small books can be printed just as easily as bigger books, and word of mouth can drive sales better than conventional advertising.

Hence short books. Something that you can look at and think "I can read this in an afternoon or evening." And if you read it, it will actually have a chance to change your life, unlike that list of best-selling titles you just haven't gotten around to reading.

For the same $30 cover price as the traditional hardcover, I'll be able to sell 10 copies of a book to someone who will share my perspective and encouragement with 9 other people. Being short, the book is more likely to be read. That's a lot more impact for the same price.

My blog posts are likewise short. You have other things to do than sit on the Internet and read other people's opinions on things. Your time is precious, I just need enough words to present an idea, a concept, or a new perspective at let you think and pray about it means in your life, what God might want you to hear in it, and how, if at all, it will affect your life.

Paul Nowak

Paul Nowak is a husband and father of 7, who also happens to be a writer and author. He has written *The Way of the Christian Samurai* among other books.

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